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State legislator and professor pushes for stronger sexual assault laws after Cornell case

By AVA HIGHLAND
Managing Editor

Trigger warning: sexual violence

Connecticut State Senator and Quinnipiac University Professor of Legal Studies Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox is proposing legislation to strengthen the state's sexual assault laws and close the "voluntary intoxication loophole." Gadkar-Wilcox's push for this legislation comes after an anonymous woman identified as Jane Doe filed a lawsuit in September alleging she was raped at a Cornell University Chi Phi fraternity house in 2024.

In the suit, Doe alleged that she was already intoxicated when she arrived at the Chi Phi house. Additionally, she alleged she was later given alcohol and drugs from fraternity members, leading her to be too intoxicated to consent to sexual acts.

Since Doe was initially voluntarily in-

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Hamden public schools financial oversight continues amidst budget shortfall

By KELSEY SWEET
Staff Writer

Hamden Public Schools will eliminate 38 full time positions for the 2026-27 school year after town officials approved millions of dollars less than the district requested. This forced the school administrators to make staffing and program reductions to help balance the budget.

Financial oversight has continued beyond the original budget approval. During its Nov. 10 meeting, the Hamden Board of Education Finance Committee included a review of the 2026-27 budget, specific education increases and everything else proposed on the agenda.

The Hamden Board of Education approved $3.57 million in budget reductions during a May 26 special meeting. This came following weeks of discussions about addressing the funding gap. This decision was made after the Legislative Council approved $103 million for the school district.

This is approximately $3.5 million less than the $107.49 million requested previously by the board of education.

The reductions affect multiple areas of the district, including classroom instruction, special education programs, student support services and exercises that are offered to children.

According to the New Haven Register, Superintendent Gary Highsmith presented the district with proposed reductions during a special meeting in May. This was described as a way that they were working with the town's funding.

"These proposed reductions are a reaction," Highsmith said during the meeting according to the New Haven Register. "They're a reaction to the allocation that we received."

The district requested a budget that would have accounted for increases in contractual obligations, including transportation, employee salaries and special educational expenses. Without the additional funding, administrators were tasked with finding ways to reduce spending while maintaining exciting services.

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As of the 2026-27 school year, Hamden Public Schools will eliminate 38 of their full time positions leading to forced staffing and program reductions.

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